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THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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United States Embassy,  
Ottawa, Ontario,  
July 7, 1961.

WRT

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cc GETZ

No reply  
discussed in  
person 7/17/61  
PM

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Dear Foy:

I am still brooding over Berlin, and this letter is really a second thought to say you should disregard my letter of June 30. The further I ponder what I suggested there, the more I become concerned that the adoption of the line therein proposed would entail too much the appearance, if not the fact, of acceptance of the basic Soviet thesis, with a resultant excessive cost to our prestige and the reliance of our allies on our resolution. My conclusion is that whatever the consequences, we must maintain our present position and its rationale. We are on a collision course, and obviously the risk of war is great, but in fact less, I have come to believe, than the present or future risk inherent in any other course. I am plowing through Shirer's book and I think the record of the summer of 1939 is increasingly influencing me.

I think, of course, we should arrange to talk to the Russians before the end of the year. This would provide the opportunity to ascertain their real intentions and degree of resolution as well as provide one of the essentials for a rallying of public opinion among our allies.

All the best.

Sincerely,

*Livingston*

Livingston T. Merchant

The Honorable  
Foy D. Kohler,  
Assistant Secretary for European Affairs,  
Department of State,  
Washington, D.C.

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*See Encl Foy D. Kohler*  
*7/14/63*